

Ceran Infinity:Mask of Arcadius

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Summary: Post-discovery of a strange artifact in the middle of Dark Space, the UNSC Infinity and the Swords of Sangheillios Shadow of Intent get transported to a strange new galaxy, in which they will have to form new allies, fight a hellish war and find new comrades within this place, while figuring out a way to head back home.  
(Highly-AU)

## 1. Prologue:Through Hell We March

**\*\*AN:**This is my interpretation of what happens if the UNSC Infinity and the Swords of Sangheillios Shadow of Intent get transported to the universe of Sunrider. This is very AU For Halo, chief being 'a little' younger than remembered by most. Thank you to **\*\*\*\*\_creamofwheat2311\_\*\*\*\*** and your story, **\*\*\*\*\_The Infinity Effect\_\*\*\*\***, for inspiring me to write my take on what would happen if these two great ships ended up in another universe(Much more the Sunrider One), with their crews.\*\*

**\*\*P.S.** I own nothing but the idea.\*\*

**\*\*Sunrider** Belongs to Love in Space and Halo belongs to Bungie/343.\*\*

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><p><strong>Chapter one:Through Hell We March<strong>

**\*\*UNSC \_Infinity. \_Deep Space.\*\***

**\*\*23rd of May 2558. Two years post-Requiem.\*\***

The young Admiral Lasky walked on-deck, flanked by his two guardian Spartan IV soldiers, aboard the bridge of his ship, the UNSC \_Infinity.\_ The crew snapped-to and saluted from their stations as they saw their Commanding Officer walk there Relaxed. He leaned on the holo-table after saluting back, then looked around at them,

shortly locking glances with each, then he turned back to the table.

"At ease." He stated, his hand placed on the cold, grey, metallic surface of the holotable. "Roland, status?"

The holo-table on the bridge flickered to life, and a yellow hologram of a man wearing a padded, fur coat of a World War 2 bomber crewman appeared on it, smiling as he straightened up. The ship's AI, Roland.

"Admiral. Welcome back to the bridge." Roland stated, grinning. "The \_Shadow of Intent\_ and us are closing in on the Artifact ONI Spoke of."

"Good. You got the link to the \_Intent\_'s bridge?" The Admiral inquired, placing a holo-tablet he had received onto the holographic pad Roland's Avatar was emanating out of. The AI Nodded, then the communication screens ahead flared blue, then the image clarified to a Swords of Sangheillios dark-blue and green banner, with two crossed Energy Swords. Ahead of them, appeared an Elite soldier in golden ornate armor, with a sword on his hip and the usual hunchback posture of the Elite. It was the Arbiter, Thel 'Vadam.

"Ah, Arbiter." Stated Lasky with a smile, straightening up. "It's good to see one of our eldest allies to date."

"\_I can say the same, Fleet Admiral."\_ The Arbiter stated, nodding. "\_What do we expect to find in such a... Remote region of space?"\_

"A piece of Precursor technology, something that presented itself as a piece of Forerunner tech." Stated Lasky, taking his tablet back into his arms. He examined it thoroughly then sighed and looked at the Arbiter, then nodded. One of his ensigns ran up to him, handing him a second tablet. As he handed the trooper his first tablet, saying a polite \_'thank you'\_, he turned his eyes to examining the second one. It was showing motion signatures around the device. Lasky sighed, then looked at the arbiter again.

"We have a situation. Apparently our presence around the tech has activated its guardians. Five Superheavy Sentinel drones are defending it." Lasky said, receiving the slightest of nods from the hunchback alien. He turned toward his troops, nodded, then sat on the command throne, which resided in the middle of the room and looked to Lasky again, sighing deeply.

"\_We will have our Seraphs deal with them."\_ Stated the Sangheilli. "\_Prepare Doctor Halsey for transfer to the artifact."\_

"Understood, Arbiter. \_Infinity, \_out." Lasky stated, then the screens ahead of him flickered off, then re-appeared, showing the artifact ahead, a rather odd construction, seemingly forerunner, with the drones orbiting around it. Beams of energy shone in the dark of space, alongside the blue coating of shield the 4 Sangheillios fighters. 4 pairs of plasma cannons roared, then the enemy drones shattered, melting, their remains floating out into the space around the strange artifact station...

It resembled a sphere with three cylindrical booms floating mid-orbit

around it. A sort of 'mini-planet', or a sentinel, if you will. Something Lasky had read about in multiple declassified reports from Onyx, the place where they trained Spartan-IIIs, and from Halsey's own tellings of the precarious situation they were in on the Forerunner shield world. But this one was different. The Cylindrical booms bent inward, toward and around the Sphere itself, which was heated a dull white, almost as if it had snowed inside. It looked so, at the very least, but it wasn't Forerunner. Apart from the symbols not matching, most of its geometry and lines were utterly different from the ones known to them. Lasky rubbed his chin, squinting to get a closer look at the lines and dots that strafed even the booms.

It resembled a proper small-scale Halo too.

A knot stuck in Lasky's throat. He struggled to swallow, but couldn't. Something was off here. That tech was too odd, too odd for the Forerunners to have created... And it started expanding.

"Roland?!" Lasky demanded. "What's going on?!"

"Sir!" Roland said, pointing toward the device. "Energy fluctuations, mirrored in the station!"

"Warn the Intent! Helmsman, full reverse!" Barked Lasky. He looked at his crewmen ready themselves for the worst.

"Aye, sir!" Answered the crewman. The ship rattled as the engines and thrusters powered to push the ship back, and the crew scrambled. They saw the Intent attempt a retreat too, but it was too late. Whatever that station was, it caught them into a sort of magnetic field. As the ships drew closer and closer, alarms blared and on-screen, the Shaw-Fujikawa Translight drive of the UNSC Ship whistled and whailed. Its inside turned bright white, as if the black hole had collapsed and Lasky grunted, feeling how he nearly got himself knocked off his feet. The strange construct powered and flared... Then everything went white...

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**\*\*Above Cera. CSF Battleship Valiant bridge. Galactic Year 261 AFHE(After Fall of the Holy Empire)\*\***

Admiral Koris Crescentia overlooked his men and women of the CSF. Their black uniforms rattled as the golden ornaments on them shook from sudden motion. Ahead, out of the main window of the Valiant, the bright blue and green planet of Cera, his home, shone against the expanse of Darkness behind it, which was pockmarked by small sprinkles of white light. Koris smiled lightly as he looked at the planet, examining each and every corner of it. He spotted his home of Cera City, shining bright on the dark side of the planet, then looked toward his second-in-command, Executive Officer Charon Riedan. The man was Koris' most trusted advisor here on his ship, and his closest friend.

"Our home is a beauty, isn't she, sir?" Charon said, smiling as he arranged his glasses back onto his nose with the push of his two fingers.

"Yes, Charon. She is." Snorted Koris, then crossed his arms. "And

we're standing to defend it... What's the status with the PACT?"

"Still a good thousand light-years away." Charon said, looking toward the admiral, who nodded.

"Good... Means we don't have to worry about fighting them back just yet." Koris muttered, then peered forward. Two white flashes...

"Oh no... \_RED ALERT\_!"

Alarms blared on the deck of the ship as soon as he barked the order. The Crimson light filled the otherwise-bright white walls of the CSF ship's command deck. "Give me a sight from the Sattelites!" He barked. On the main viewscreen above the command chair, lit up the images from a pair of outer-system satellites. The sight of two hulking ships, one box-like, painted dull-black with white lines strapped to it and the other, a sea-monster-like design, bulbous hull... Bristling with armaments. The initial scans revealed hundreds of small trinities and dozens of lines of ionized gas from which both laser and plasma could erupt at any moment. Koris sat down in his command chair, then pointed forward. "Fleet. One-half forward! Charge all weapons and power shields!"

\_"AYE!"\_ the bridge crew chorused. Koris examined his options now... They could possibly be facing an unknown faction as of yet, which would just mean trouble for them... or some for of new allies? The first ship was clearly human in design. No-one made ships that boxy unless they were the PACT. The other one, though... \_That\_ was clearly an alien vessel design. He'd take no chances... Hail first, if there's no answer, blast them.

...

\_**\*\*Infinity\*\*\_>\_\*\* bridge. Unknown location or time.\*\*\_**

Lasky groaned as he pulled himself upward, then scanned the bridge. It was shining dark-red, signal of running on emergency power. The crew somehow managed to get back to their stations while he had been... Knocked out... and resume their duties. One of the ensigns walked up to him and handed a tablet. He nodded, then thumbed it and examined the files. The ship was knocked out. Whatever that device that transported them here was, it had disabled the entire vessel. The Forerunner engines didn't respond anymore, nor did the rest of the ship.

"Status on the \_Intent\_?!" He barked. The ensign nodded.

"Preliminary scans show she's in the same state as us, sir!" Answered one of the scanner officers. No good. Meant that they were both defenseless.

"Status of our power?!" He demanded, looking toward the forward screens. They lit up with a warning, then hissed with static and cleared... The clear sight of space shone ahead of them, answering him.

"Sir! Halsey intervened in the basic power systems!" A second soldier answered. "We've got sensors and visuals up and running! Lights are

coming back online too!"

And true to the man's words, the room lit up white again. The holo-table flickered to life too, showing the golden bombardier avatar of Roland, who nodded.

"Sir... Engines and long-range coms are still offline..." He stated. "We're working on getting them back online, but ship-to-ship is also working."

'INCOMING! WE'VE DETECTED FIFTEEN SHIPS ON CLOSE APPROACH! LASER PODS AND MASS ACCELERATION CANNONS AS ARMAMENT! TWO O'CLOCK!' Screamed a woman from the far edge of the bridge. Lasky looked toward the sight... Five bright-white battleships moved toward them at one-half speed. He knew the maneuver. Steady advance, and if they didn't get shot, it'd be all good... Then again, no idea if the \_Intent\_ was back either... He looked on at the advancing ships with fear, then barked. "Do NOT power weapons just yet! Let them think we're disarmed! Focus on getting our Com online!"

"Sir, yes sir... Attempted hail redirected..." Roland answered... His avatar flickered once, then Cortana appeared beside him and snapped her fingers, grinning.

"Sir... Cortana's got the Com online..." Roland smirked, then looked to the Chief's AI. She nodded.

"Been my pleasure, Roland..." She stated, then tapped her ear toward Lasky. "Second Hail incoming... Should we accept the handshake?"

Lasky sighed in relief, then nodded. "Patch'em through..."

The image of a man clad in a matte-black uniform, covered by golden accents and medals, stood ahead of Lasky on the com screen... The man had silver eyes, golden hair and his uniform was straighter than any Navy Man's uniform he had ever seen. Seeing epaulettes with 4 stars and the rank of admiral made Lasky smile and sigh in relief, then shake his head and look back at the man, straightening up.

"Hello, Admiral..." The UNSC Navy Man said, smiling. However long it took the other admiral, he smiled too, nodding.

"Hello to you too, Admiral..." He answered, then looked to the man at his side and waved him out of the picture. The soldier left, leaving only Lasky and the other admiral.

"I... Guess you want an explanation as to how we're here?" Lasky asked, receiving a nod. "Okay... Send out an envoy ship. We'll talk on your grounds..."

"Understood... That was... A quick decision?" Stated the admiral, a bit confused.

"Well..." Lasky mused, sighing. "It's kind of a long story..."

"Sir... We're being hailed by the \_Intent\_..." \_Reported Holland, a bit surprised. "They say that... They KNEW we were talking to the home fleet here... Sir? Orders?"

"Brief them... Get the Arbiter to come to the meeting with us and if he wants, grab a pair of his soldiers too..."

**\*\*Aboard Ceran Envoy Ship.\*\***

The Master Chief, Petty Officer John-117 walked aboard with Admiral Lasky and Blue Team not far behind. Kelly's helmet shone bright orange in the dull-white lights above them. He didn't like the coloring of the place. A bit too... Sterile for John's taste. Behind him, he saw the Arbiter walk aboard with two Sangheilli guards. The Elite made the first move, extending his hand and flexing his fingers forward in sign of a handshake, which John took and nodded.

"Good to see you again, Spartan." The Arbiter said, his mandibles flexing in a sort of a smile. "Wish it would've been under better circumstances that we got to speak again..."

"Were it so easy." John said, making Kelly chuckle lightly behind him. 'Were It So Easy' was the arbiter's line. He snapped his gaze toward her and she straightened up, saluting. "Forgive me, Chief... I will try to restrain myself."

"Please do..." Lasky whispered. "I'd rather we don't end up making new enemies here..."

The door ahead of them slid open with a hiss, and on the other side of the table, resided two soldiers, both of them clad in white-grey indentured armor, very curved. On their backs, two bright-blue energy weapons shone off, rounded off as well, but a bit boxy toward the heat sinks. The two soldiers parted to the side and straightened up, then saluted, as through the second door, walked the admiral of the fleet they spoke to. The soldier nodded, saluted and the others snapped-too as well. Lasky walked up to him and extended his hand, to which they grasped it strongly, then nodded.

"Admiral Lasky I presume..." The admiral said, then looked off to the side and gasped as the Arbiter walked in.

"Is there a problem?" The Arbiter spoke, to which the man shook his head.

"No, no sir... Nothing at all..." The man grinned, then looked to Lasky. "Shall we start the talks, sir?"

"Yes. Please do."

## 2. Leaving Cera

**\_\*\*5 years later...\*\*\_**

Captain Kayto Shields sat aboard the shuttle that was to take him to his ship. The 23-year-old Captain ran a hand through his spiky snow-white hair, examining what lay outside the small glass window separating him from the vacuum of space. Ahead and below, his home planet of Cera, a glistening orb of aquamarine, green and silver, floated in the middle of the large expanse of twinkling stars behind it, a shine Kayto wouldn't have believed he'd see. Not this early in his age anyway. He looked back behind himself, to see the enigmatic

Doctor Catherine Halsey examining her tablet thoroughly, her blue eyes lost in the streams of data shining onto it. By her side were two soldiers clad in ballistic armors, painted the Ceran Marines' ultramarine and white. UNSC MA5B Rifles lay by their sides as they saluted the captain upon him turning back toward them.

"Doc." The Captain said. Halsey snapped her eyes out of her strange, almost emotionless trance, sighed and arranged her glasses back from the tip of her nose. The woman was smaller than Kayto in stature, almost a Forehead. Her hair used to be a shade of nutmeg-brown, but now was greyed-out silver thanks to the possibly strenuous ops she and the Spartans of Blue Team have been undertaking back on Cera, aside from the usual drug bust or anything of the sorts. Her blue eyes lay hidden behind a pair of antique glasses she used for reading.

"Something wrong, Captain?" She asked, calm and collected as Kayto looked at her. He shook his head.

"Thought I'd let ya know we're closing in on the ship and that you might want to see something YOU Yourself worked on completed." He stated, receiving a nod from Halsey.

"I helped design two ships..." She muttered. "I trust that they took care of Cortana while she was helping design and build it?" She asked, smallest of smiles forming on her face, so small that Kayto barely saw it.

"I'd suppose so." Kayto mused, then nodded. "Wouldn't want to piss off the Chief, would we?"

"No..." Halsey returned to her tablet, continuing thorough examination of the data she got from an artifact on Cera. "No, we would definitely not want John to be angry..." She continued, fondness, though little if any, making her voice drop a bit. Kayto sighed, nodded and turned back to his window as he looked over the planet. The pilot sat ahead of him, obscured by his seat, but probably smiling as he was the first to catch a glimpse of the ship.

"Can't wait to see your girl, can you, Captain?" He spoke, making Kayto remember one other person he'd meet today aside from the rest of his crew. A woman he still remembered after almost 5 years of separation. He smiled, then loosened into his seat, still examining Cera and sighed, then looked toward the Pilot's seat and spoke calmly. "I and Ava we... Haven't seen each other in 5 years... I'd doubt she even remembered me."

The pilot scoffed, then laughed. "The Commander? No, not her, Cap! The ship. Here, I'll swing you around so you can get a good look at her."

The ship shuddered as small whispers were heard. The Directional Thrusters of the small craft fired, a feeling Kayto had in his stomach. The ship rotated a good 90 degrees for him to finally spot the UNSC-Built Anchor-Class Space Station's Cradle and the ship within it. The Sunrider. A sleek design, heavily armored, painted bright-white, with a Crimson stripe across its front, she came to be to Kayto's liking. The Assault Carrier-class ship was heavily armed and very streamlined, but also strangely endearing and

powerful-feeling. Like an arrowhead, poised to strike.

"Wow..." Kayto could only utter out as he grinned.

"She's a beauty." The pilot stated. "Ship's so new and state-of-the-art, they had to train a whole new line of Officers just to fly her." He continued, then flicked three switches and keyed his microphone. "Anchor-17, Anchor-17, this is Orbital Shuttle Theta-0-1-7, requesting Permission to dock. I have the Captain of the new ships here along with Doc Halsey and they're just dying to see her, how copy, over?"

"\_Copy that, Theta-oh-seventeen. Welcome home, ease her in. Anchor Actual, out." \_The cheery voice of the female controller came over.

Finally, after a few minutes of 'easing her in', Kayto found himself walking aboard under escort by the two Ceran/UNSC Marines, Halsey not far behind him. The hangar of the CSF ship \_Sunrider\_ was the size of a medium-large carrier, cavernous, with 20 Holding Cradles for the technology that replaced the basic fighter within the span of a few thousand years. The Ryder attack Mechs. Though none were present within the massive white-red hangar of the CSF Navy vessel, the Attack Mechs were of many classes. From the simple scout 'mook' or 'soldier', to the heavier, more combat-oriented classes and even support classes, that could deploy shields to aid the rest of the crew. Kayto looked ahead, snapping out of his examination as a woman with nutmeg-brown hair and Cherry eyes walked toward him, straight military posture, beautiful and fair-skinned. Her uniform was clean-cut the best-arranged out of the whole crew, her short-to-the-knee skirt leaving nothing to chance. She stopped in front of Shields and Halsey and saluted.

"Doctor, Captain. Welcome aboard the CSF \_Sunrider.\_" She stated, receiving a nod from Kayto.

"It's been far too long, Ava." He said, taking the young woman completely by surprise. A bit of shock read across her face as she rubbed her forearm.

"I guess so..." She said softly, then looked back toward them, clicking her heels. "Doctor, Captain, if you two wish, I'll take you on a tour of the ship."

"Very well. Lead on." Kayto said, nodding. Ava nodded to him too, then straightened up. "As you can already tell, this is the Hangar of the ship, where up to 20 Ryders may be stored for refits and deployment. Our Ryders won't arrive until next week, with a complement of UNSC Marines from the Infinity and Sangheilli Elites from the \_Shadow of Intent\_, when she returns from her Deep Space mission. You may also come here to order equipment changes and refits for all Ryders upon their arrival."

"If it wasn't for the UNSC Techs' intervention, this Ryder bay would've been 8 Ryders short." Halsey said, sliding her tablet into her backpack.

"So, 12 Ryders?" Kayto muttered. "Still, a big complement for this kind of a vessel."



"Yes, indeed." Ava said, nodding. "Follow me, please." She continued. The trio, under escort by the marines, walked toward a smaller bay, indented within the Ship's sides. Much to Kayto's surprise, he saw five Weapon racks filled to the brim with UNSC Weaponry, from the simple M6 Magnums to highly-advanced 'Spartan Lasers' and even to silenced M7/Caseless Submachineguns with Holographic scopes. On the right wall, large one-man pods were aligned in their holding cradles, open wide. The seats inside were leather-covered and around them, electronics and control pads, everything a vehicle needed.

"This is the Single-Occupant Exoatmospheric Insertion Vehicle room. SOEIV room, or the Helljumpers' Nest as Gunnery Sergeant Buck has called it." She said. Halsey nodded and examined the pods, placing a hand upon one's cold steel.

"The ODSST Drop Room. Good, they took my suggestion to have one of those." She smirked, nodding.

"Very well... Continuing on..." Ava answered as they walked out of the room. They exited and went down a small staircase into the belly of the ship. There, they saw seven Gyroscopic machines on which pieces of heavy MJOLNIR Generation II Armor resided, one of which was painted a dull-white with golden pockmarks. The armor was a mashed set, a Reconnaissance Helmet, a CQB Chest plate, a Mark V left shoulder and Heavy Combat right, padded legs for protection and a pair of knives strapped to both shoulder pads. Kayto walked up to it and picked the helmet up and off the arm on which it resided, examining it. The visor was bright blue, a small slit through which only the eyes would peer through.

"Ah. The S-Deck's smaller relative aboard this ship." Halsey said, examining the files of the persons to which the armors belonged. She nodded, happy about the results though not showing it, then slung the tablet under her arm again. "This is where this ship's SPARTAN Contingent will be spending their time, mostly... And I Can already tell who it is..."

"You always knew us, ma'am." Stated the voice of a male, rough and powerful. Kayto looked back, to see a squad of five men and a single female walking down from the deck, the female sporting a robotic right arm in place of the left one she had lost during combat. This squad was a group Kayto had heard and read about. During the Reach Defense, this team held ground as the only thing between the planet and utter annihilation. A group of brave soldiers, no... Of Brave SPARTANS. The Spartan-III Team, NOBLE, were well known for their bravery and courage during the defense of Reach and as its heroes.

"Captain Shields, Commander Crescentia, Doctor Halsey." Their leader, Carter, stated, nodding and running his hand through his crew-cut raven hair. The man had hazel eyes, tanned skin and several cut marks across his face, on his chest, the ID Number of the Spartan Corps. A259. Alpha Company's 259th candidate and a hero in his own right. He had learnt to command since an early age, an elite fighter, born to be like he was.

"Ah, Lieutenant-Commander." Halsey said, extending her right hand. The soldier shook it, then nodded.

"Good to see you again, ma'am." He stated, then looked to Jorge,

their Spartan-II Comrade, walking down. Halsey gave him the smallest of smiles, then nodded. The rest of the squad, Kayto knew all-too-well from his read-up information. Catherine-B320, NOBLE's NCO and Carter's close friend, she bore a grin and, now, since Reach, has grown her raven hair out to her shoulders. Tanned herself. Jun-A266, the team's sniper, a bald man with a spiderweb tattoo on the right of his face and finally, the enigmatic Emile-A239, the squad's Grenadier and CQC Specialist, but there was one among the crew Kayto didn't recognize... Two, for that matter. A younger girl with bright-silver hair and emerald eyes and a man about her age with blue eyes and brown hair.

The boy walked up to Kayto, then extended his hand, to which Kayto shook it and nodded. "You are?"

"I'm Noble Six. Lieutenant Cole-B312. Good to meet you, captain." He answered, nodding. The woman looked toward Kayto and spoke in a harsh, very cold tone, enough to send shivers up even god damn Halsey's spine, much more the rest around her. "I am Veronica-B361. Cole's sister. An honor to meet the man we'll be serving with."

"Uhh..." Kayto rubbed the back of his head, then nodded. "Same... Cole... Veronica..." He looked to Halsey, who sighed and nodded.

"We're prepping for MJOLNIR Gen-II Tests." Carter said, gesturing to the pods. "Sooo..."

"Right." Ava said. "We'll be out of your hairs now, Lieutenant-Commander. Watch out not to dent the ship's insides TOO MUCH."

"Noted." Carter smirked, then looked to his squad. "Spartans, Gear up."

...

Kayto walked aboard the bridge and to his sights, came the biggest he'd ever been on aside from the battleships of the CSF Fleet while touring as a rookie. The cavernous place didn't have one empty spot in its whole area. Consoles and catwalks dotted whatever space you'd consider free, while in the middle of the room, a holographic table which could display the map of the Galaxy they were currently in resided, turned off. On the deck, two CSF Marines carrying BR55X Battle Rifles shouldered them and snapped crisp salutes at the Captain and Commander walking aboard. On the consoles, the crew of the bridge were working continuously, ensigns left and right, and around the holomap, they saw two UNSC soldiers, a man and a woman, examining different bouts of data.

"ONI." Halsey whispered with disgust. "Ignore them. They'll be of no trouble to us."

"I hope so." Kayto answered, then looked to Ava settle in her chair near her command console, right beside the Captain's chair. He looked to Halsey, who nodded and then left for the lift. She called it and switched to the Engineering deck of the ship, leaving with a quiet hum. Kayto walked toward his seat, then turned it around. It spun around its axis, toward him. Jet-Black leather covered the

comfortable parts of the seat, while on the armrest and on a forward support resided Holographic controls and even data taps and screens. He sat down, examining the chair to its smallest detail. He then looked to Ava, who nodded.

"Ship AI is active..." Ava said, nodding. Shock read across Kayto's face. He didn't hear about any sort of Artificial Intelligence being implanted into the \_Sunrider\_. Hundreds of times had he heard that the \_Infinity\_ had her own 'Smart' AI, but never did he hear that HIS ship would have one. He was shocked as ahead of him, the Avatar of a young woman, clad in bright blue light, her 'skin' embedded with code lines of zeroes and ones running up and down her entire body, materialized like out of thin air. She straightened up, saluted, then spoke in a voice very similar to Halsey's, proud too.

"UNSC AI Cortana, ID Code CTN 0452-9, at your service." She stated, smiling. "Ah, doctor Halsey. Good to see you again."

Halsey nodded from her spot within Engineering. "\_Same to you Cortana. I take it your core defragmentation went well?\_"

"Yeah. Heightened my lifespan by 10 more years, thanks for asking." She smiled slyly, then looked to Kayto. "Captain." She bowed, then straightened up. "I'll be glad to serve aboard here as this ship's Artificial Intelligence."

"Uhm..." Kayto mused, then smiled and nodded. "Glad to have you aboard, Cortana..." He shot a cold glance to Ava. "Once we're out of port, I'd like to talk with my XO About unannounced staff, but anyways, welcome aboard."

"Sir." Cortana snapped-to, then flicked three Holo-panels around her. "We're ready to begin engine testing on your mark."

"Very good... Spool them up, push us out, one-half-full." Kayto answered, nodding to Cortana and Ava.

"Aye, aye, captain." Ava said, slowly writing commands onto her console's holographic touch display. Three dim lights flickered and the ship hummed as around him, the bridge lights blinked Orange twice.

A red light.

"Two contacts, coming out of warp, bearing Five-zero-zero by Seven-Seven-Three!" Cortana yelled, her Avatar flaring red as she tried to track the incoming bogeys, her arms continuously striking against holographic keys surrounding her. Five more panels appeared around her, \_Weapons, Shields\_ and \_Engine Countdown\_. She refocused her blue eyes onto the radar, then flicked it on, to show the two bogeys, strange-shaped craft with missile racks around the main part, in a Three-Dimensional model. "ID Matches PACT Missile Frigates! WE'VE GOT HOT INCOMING!"

Out in the darkness of space, the two PACT Light Frigates skimmed through space, their crimson-red hulls shining off in contrast to the darkness of the space around them. The two craft had circles etched behind them onto their hull, their Ion engines burning bright red and lighting the hull up. The circles were their warp rings, old technology for these times, yet still very useful for quick

deployment and exit out of Warp. The Frigate Duo loaded their missiles into the racks, the gunners took aim and the barrage of missiles howled off. The thirty small 'Helldart' rockets arched through space, leaving exhaust trails in a crisscrossing pattern as they headed for the Anchor Station's cradle. In his chair, Kayto clenched his teeth. His ship was too slow to power up...

And finally, just as the missiles impacted the hull of the Anchor Station's Cradle, setting it ablaze, the ship pushed itself out of there under its own power. Behind them, the Cradle was now nothing more than a heap of twisted metal and burning fuel lines, but the ship pushed itself free. Kayto held his resolve, trying not to cheer until they were out of the frying pan. He looked at the Combat Screen deployed by Cortana, then nodded and looked to both Ava and her.

"Turn us around, 180 Degrees! Get us engaging those damned Reds!" He barked. Ava nodded, then began furiously tapping commands on the console, while Cortana's Avatar flared as she engaged in Cybernetic combat with the Frigates and their crews. She flicked off several screens, then powered five others on, showing lines of code as of yet unrecognized by Kayto. He felt and heard the rumble and creaking of the hull as the \_Sunrider\_'s directional thrusters flared, pushing the ship 180 degrees portside. It banked and its cannons were now level for the enemy ships. He grinned, then barked. "FIRE SAVIOURS! FORWARD SALVO!"

"AYE!" Cortana barked, loading the weapons up on her HUD, seeing their status.

The hull of the massive ship groaned as three detonations sounded off from the front of the ship, then three more. Ahead of them, Kinetic Energy rounds arched toward their targets from the three-barrel Savior Cannon Batteries. The first Salvo struck the left-side ship, tearing it completely apart. The ship blew apart, a second sun enlightening their path. A shot grazed the other's hull, tearing two Decks' seals off. Kayto saw bodies fly out, breathed in, out and ordered. "STARBOARD TRINITIES! FIRE!" And from the side of the ship, lances of blue hardlight energy arched forward, gutting the other ship and tearing it completely in half. The beams struck its drive core and it blew apart, another bright detonation that soon extinguished in the darkness of space.

The bridge erupted into an uproar of Cheers as Kayto exhaled, smiling. He looked to Ava, who nodded, then turned back to her data screens. Cortana turned toward the Captain and gave him a thumbs up, smiling. Kayto nodded to her and gave her the same treatment, then settled into his chair and spoke softly "Ava. Get us in-line with the rest of the fleet... We need to be prepared for any more surprises..."

"Aye, aye, Captain." Ava said, clicking two more commands. Ahead of them, they saw the four Battleships of the CSF lined up in formation, alongside several hundred other smaller support and reconnaissance craft, including UNSC Longswords, Broadswords and even three UNSC-modeled frigates, Paris-Classes. Kayto sighed, then looked about, noticing Cortana's mouth agape.

"Commander..." She whispered, sending a scan toward Ava's datapad. The woman flicked the file on and gasped.

"NEW CONTACT!" She yelled.

Outside of the Planet's Gravitational pull, just in sight for the rest of the Fleet to see, appeared a fleet of combat vessels and in the middle of them all, initial scans revealing it as 3 Kilometers Long, a ship of such size it was incomprehensible why it was built... An enemy Dreadnaught. A PACT DREADNAUGHT! The thing sized 3 Kilometers in length, 1 and a half in width and half a kilometer in height. External booms expanding from its central warp Ring stood out like sore thumbs and it was bristling with weapons, also painted the bloody-crimson red of the PACT Fleet... Kayto was in complete shock, like most of the fleet's and ship's crew. Cortana tried to scan it, failing twice, then looked to Ava.

"Ava, what the hell am I looking at?! I didn't know PACT Had something this colossal!" Kayto demanded, slamming his hand into his Chair, Ava looked on in awe.

"I'm just getting this Data! It's the PACT Superdreadnaught \_LEGION\_!" She yelled, then gasped. "ENERGY SPIKE DETECTED FROM DREADNAUGHT! BRACE!"

From the dreadnaught's booms, emerged lances of pure red energy. They arched from their field generators, forward, knifing through space at incredibly high speeds. As they reached the CSF Fleet, they barely had the time to react. The lances impacted the fleet, gutting two ships from the get-go, including the Paris-class Frigates, which had exploded after the insanely perfect impact, even after the Hardlight Shield tech had been installed. Three of the Four Battleships had sunk thanks to that strike. The \_Sunrider\_'s Starboard decks had been impacted. Now leaking air, nothing more than melted metal and armor resided there. That side's Trinities had been welded shut thanks to the pinpoint strike.

Ava swallowed, her eyes narrowed. "Such \_disgusting\_ firepower..." She whispered, then looked at the data. "CAPTAIN! UNSC FRIGATES \_Dawn of Hope\_ \_AND\_ \_Patriarch\_ \_HAVE BEEN SUNK! THE \_Preliator\_, \_Reaper\_ and \_Creedence\_ \_HAVE BEEN SUNK! \_Valiant\_ \_HAS WITHSTOOD HEAVY DAMAGE AND IS DEAD IN THE WATER! THE CREW ARE EVACUATING!" She gasped, clutching her console. "ANOTHER ENERGY SURGE!"

"This one's \_big\_!" Cortana Yelled, scanning the room and the worried glances of the crew.

\_"HARD TO PORT!" \_Kayto barked, strength in his voice.

The front of the \_Legion\_ heated from dull-red, to a bright orange, then to a burning white as its frontal Phasic cannon charged. It powered, particles of dark matter gathering within the barrel. The energy swirled within the strange ball of light and it shot. The lance of energy split the darkness of space, maddeningly brightening and whipped past the dodging \_Sunrider\_, which was now limping to get away. Behind them, Cera's atmosphere heated and below it, a detonation of an incredible scale lit where Cera City had once resided. Kayto held himself from screaming out loud at the sight, clutching his chair's armrests, looking at the burning, bubbling crater that once was their home and whispered to Ava...

"What the \_hell\_ just happened..."

"Captain... They nuked Cera City with that last Salvo! I'm barely getting the casualty reports from that strike, but... Oh My Gods..." Ava whispered, now thankful she was sitting in a chair. The woman nearly fainted as she looked at the number. Cortana turned toward the Captain and yelled. "CAPTAIN! The ship's Slipspace drive is charged! We're good to go on your orders!"

Kayto swallowed, then looked at his burning homeworld and nodded. "Get us the hell out of here!" He ordered. Ahead of the ship, space rippled with energy, turned in on itself then blasted open. The ship pushed itself forward and entered the black hole inch by inch. As Kayto took one last look at his burning homeworld, he swore an oath. This was not it. Not by a long shot. He'd go to hell and back to see it freed again. As it vanished into the darkness, Kayto sighed, then leaned back, nodding. He'd get back at PACT...

And get back at them \_DAMN GOOD.\_

End  
file.